Testing and Repairing PDF Accessibility in Adobe Acrobat Pro

State of Iowa

January – February 2025

MSF&W

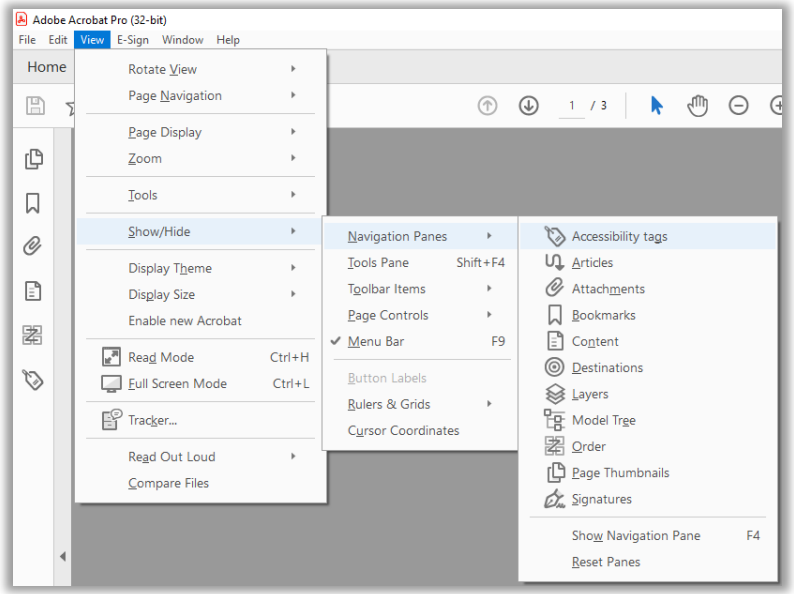
Adobe Acrobat Professional

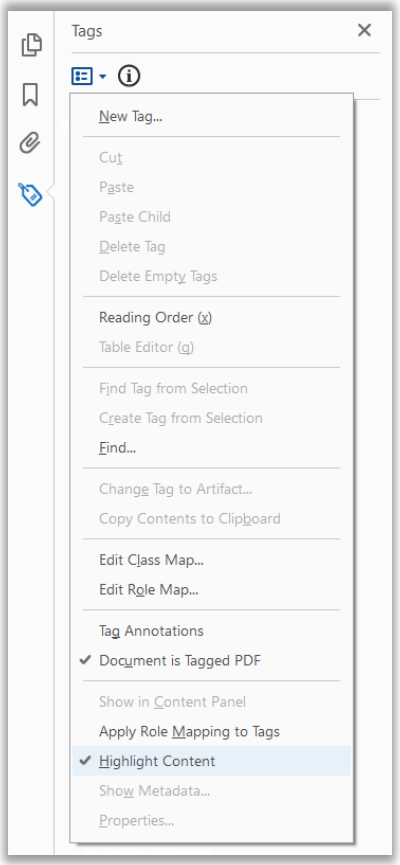
- **Adobe Acrobat Pro** is required for accessibility testing and repair
- Three parts of a PDF behind-the-scenes:
  - **Physical View** - what you see
  - **Content Layer** - text used for searching
  - **Tags Layer** - text with logical structure
    - Like HTML does for web pages

Acrobat Setup

Accessibility Tags Pane

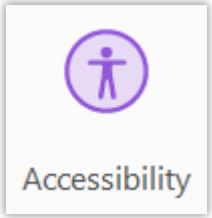
- View → Show/Hide → Navigation Panes → Accessibility Tags
- Tags pane → Options → Highlight Content

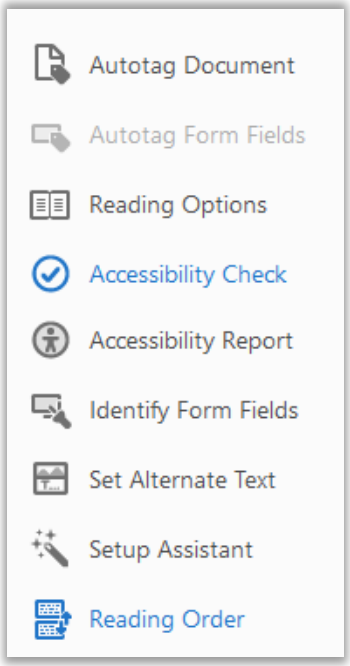




Accessibility Tools

- Tools tab → Accessibility → Accessibility Check
- Tools tab → Accessibility → Reading Order
- Add to quick tools toolbar by dragging



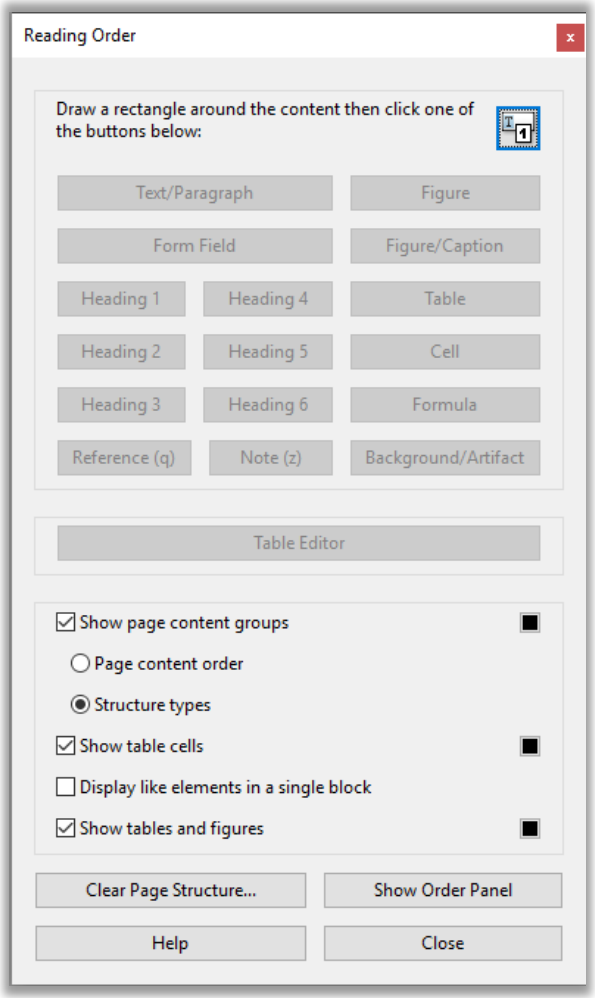




Testing & Repairing PDF in Acrobat

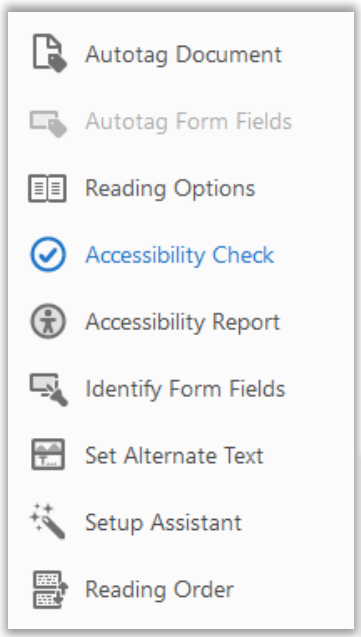
Reading Order Tool

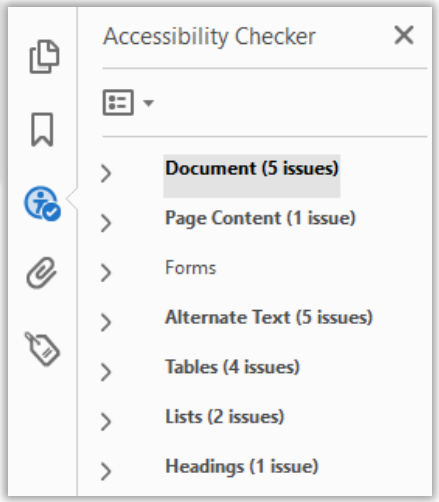
- Use to:
  - Background/artifact decorative content (images, borders, etc.)
  - Select and tag content
  - Add data table headers
- Choose Structure types radio button to see tags



Accessibility Check

- Automated check of PDF document accessibility
- Creates a report with a status for each rule checked
- Use Accessibility Check quick tool
- Report shows in the Accessibility Checker pane





Accessibility Checker Pane

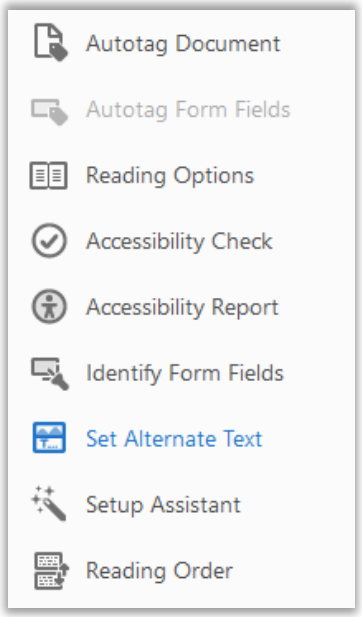
- Report that provides a status for each rule checked:
  - Passed: The item is accessible
  - Needs Manual Check: The Accessibility Check feature couldn't check the item automatically. Verify the item manually.
  - Failed: The item didn't pass the accessibility check.
  - Skipped: Rule was not checked because it wasn't selected in the Accessibility Checker Options dialog box.

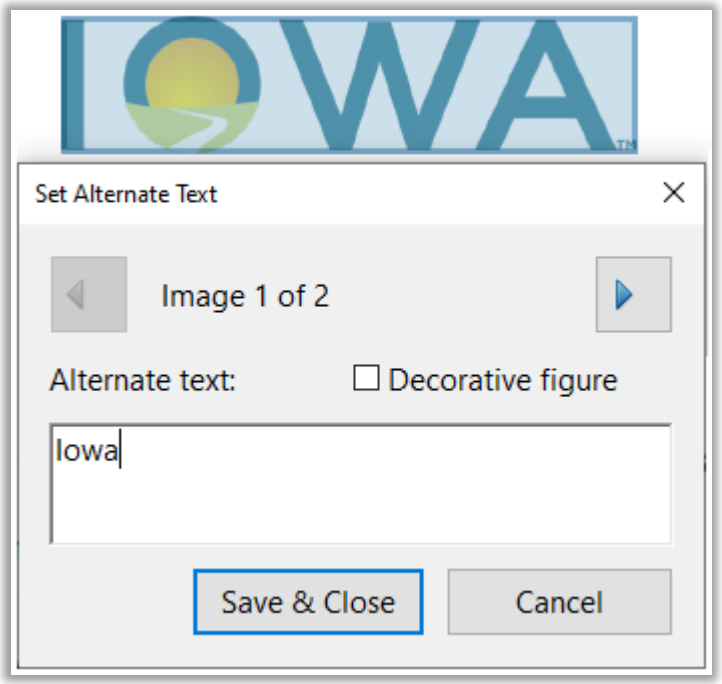
Figures Alternate Text Rule

- Checks that all non-artifacted images have alternate text
- Note: The appropriateness of alt text must be checked manually.

Alt Text for Meaningful Images

- Tools → Accessibility → Set Alternate Text
- Type alternate text → click Next button
- Click Save & Close button when finished





Document Logical Reading Order Rule

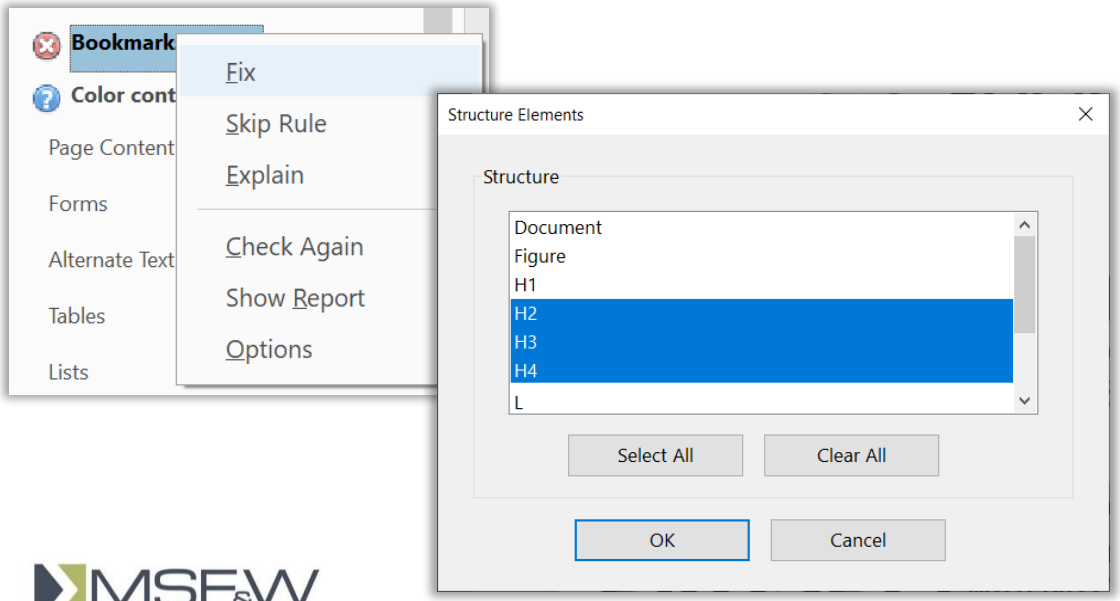
- Make sure the reading order displayed in the Tags pane matches the logical reading order of the document. Pay special attention to content in columns.
- Manually check reading order
  - Tags pane → arrow through tags while visually checking order in the physical view
- Drag tags into the correct order

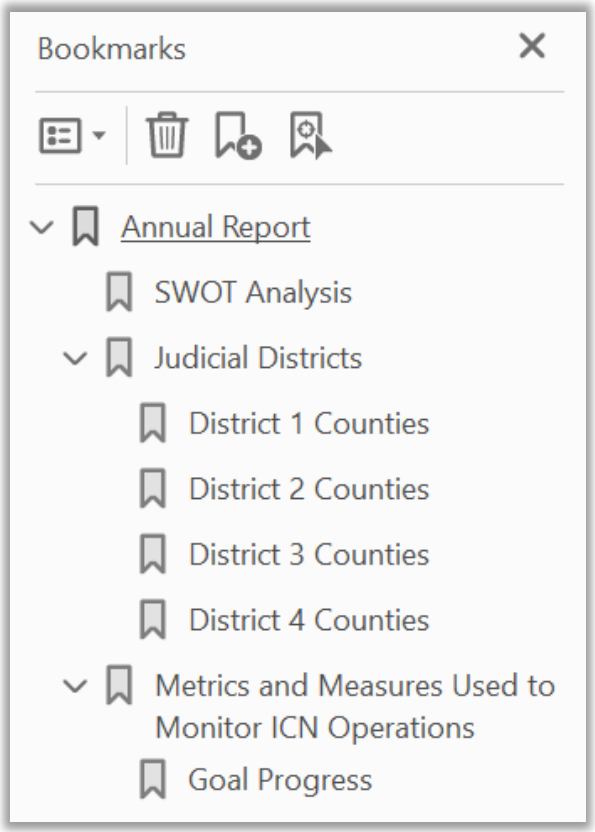
Document Color Contrast Rule

- Manually check that the contrast between foreground and background colors is sufficient.
- Sufficient contrast should be kept in mind during document creation, so it doesn’t need to be addressed in the PDF.
- Note: Users can customize colors when viewing a PDF.

Document Bookmarks Rule

- Checks for bookmarks matching the document structure when the document has 21 or more pages
- To add bookmarks: Right-click rule → Fix → Select headings → Click OK button

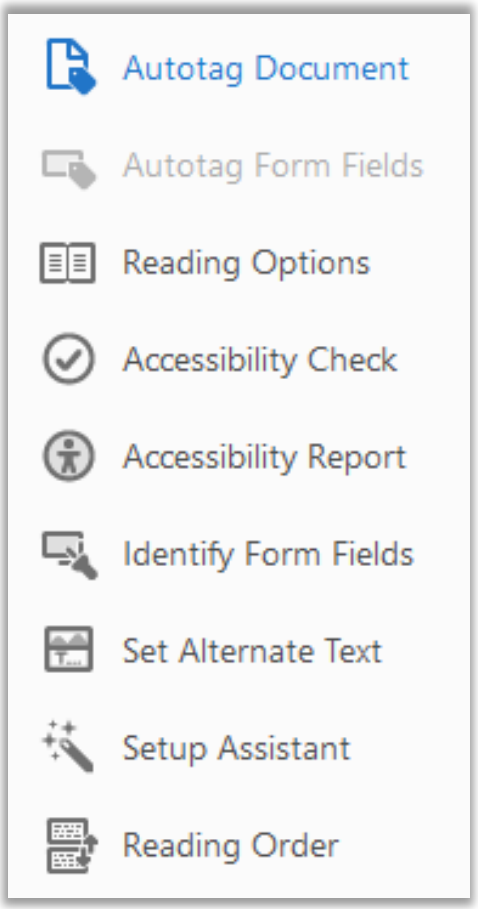




MSF&W

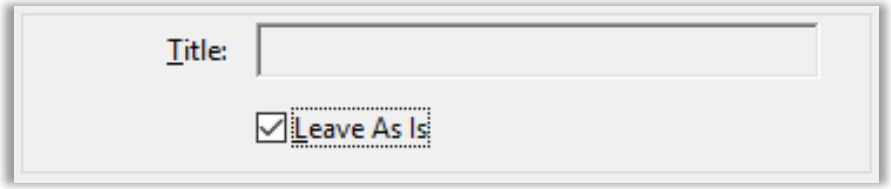
Document Tagged PDF Rule

- Checks that the document is tagged
- Tools → Accessibility → Autotag Document
- Use Accessibility Check to verify
- Don’t forget to check the reading order after auto-tagging



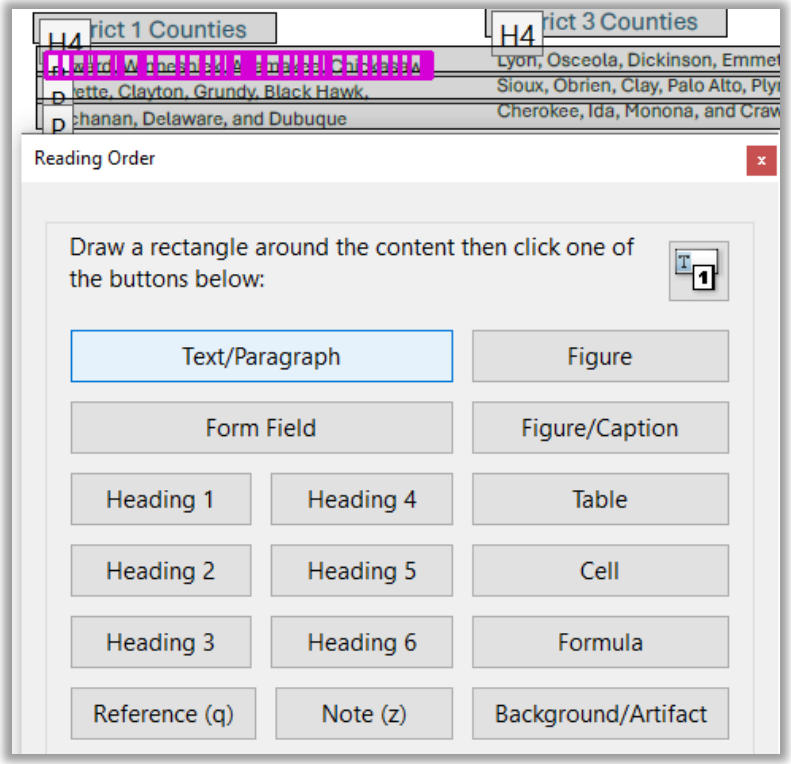
Document Title Rule

- Checks for a title (different than the file name) in the Acrobat application title bar
- Right click rule → Fix → Uncheck Leave As Is → type title



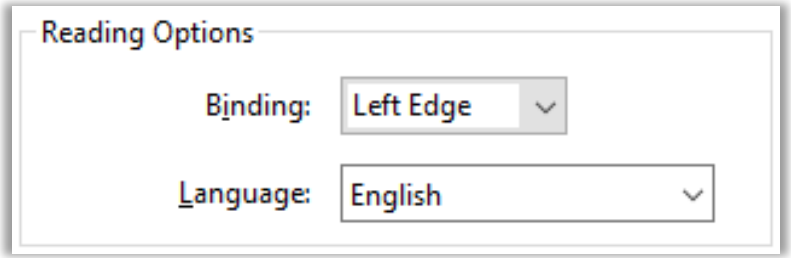
Document Logical Reading Order Rule

- To regroup content
  - View → Tools → Accessibility → Reading Order
  - Draw a rectangle around text → Click the Text/Paragraph button to create a paragraph
  - Move paragraph tags into the correct place in the Tags pane



Document Language Rule

- Checks whether the primary text language for the PDF is specified
- If the whole document is not in English, change the language, even if this rule does not fail
- File → Properties → Advanced tab → Reading Options → Language

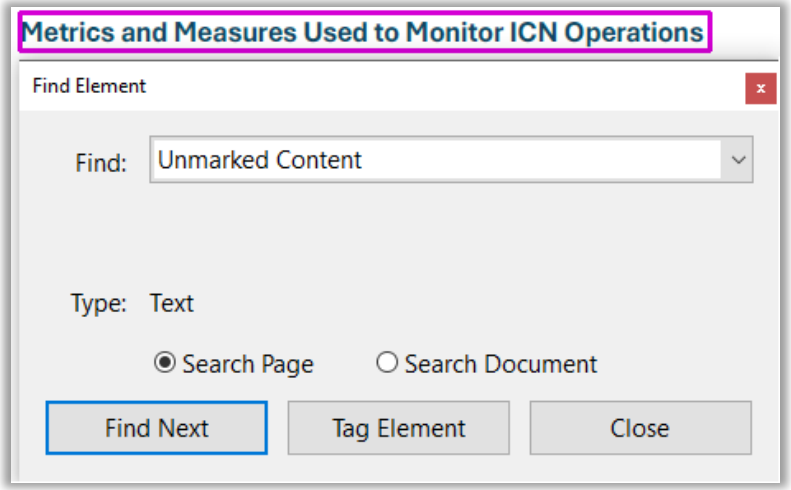


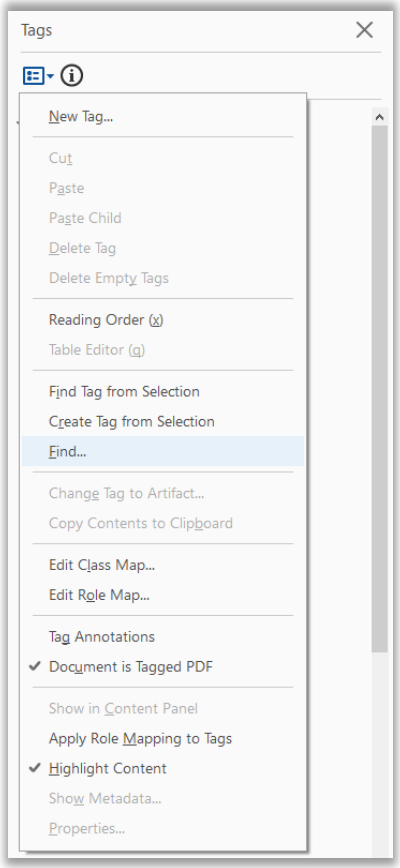
Page Content Tagged Content Rule

- Checks all content in the document is either included in the Tags tree or marked as an artifact
- To tag untagged content:
  1. Click element to highlight it in the physical view and note the page the element is on
  2. Tags pane → Click on an element on the page with the error → Options → Find → Choose Unmarked Content → Click Find/Find Next button until missing element is highlighted → Click Tag Element button → Choose Type → Click OK button → Click Close button

Page Content Tagged Content Rule

3. Find the added element in the Tag tree.
   If necessary, Right click element → Choose Properties → Change Type → Click Close button
4. Move the edited tag to the correct place in the Tags tree

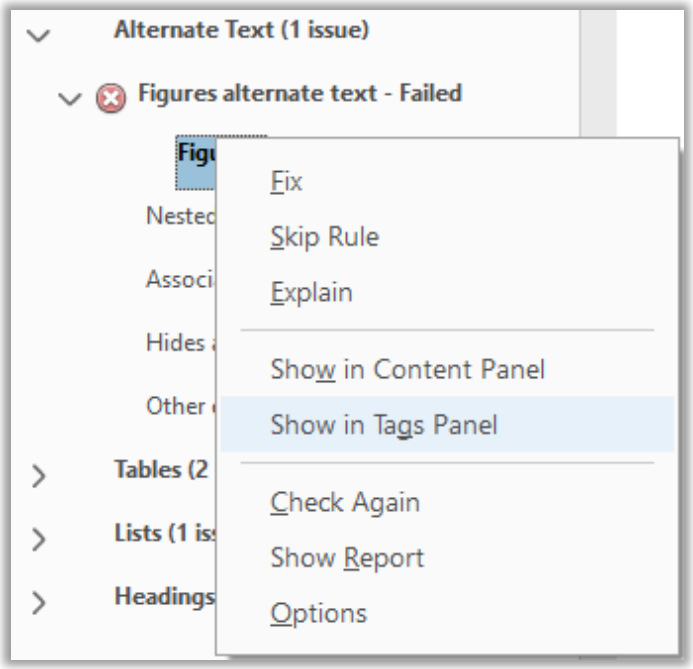




Figures Alternate Text Rule

For decorative images:

1. Right click on the figure shown in the error → Choose Show in Tags Panel



Figures Alternate Text Rule

2. Open the Figure tag and right click on the contents → Choose Change Tag to Artifact to show the Create Artifact dialog → Click the OK button → Delete the empty Figure tag

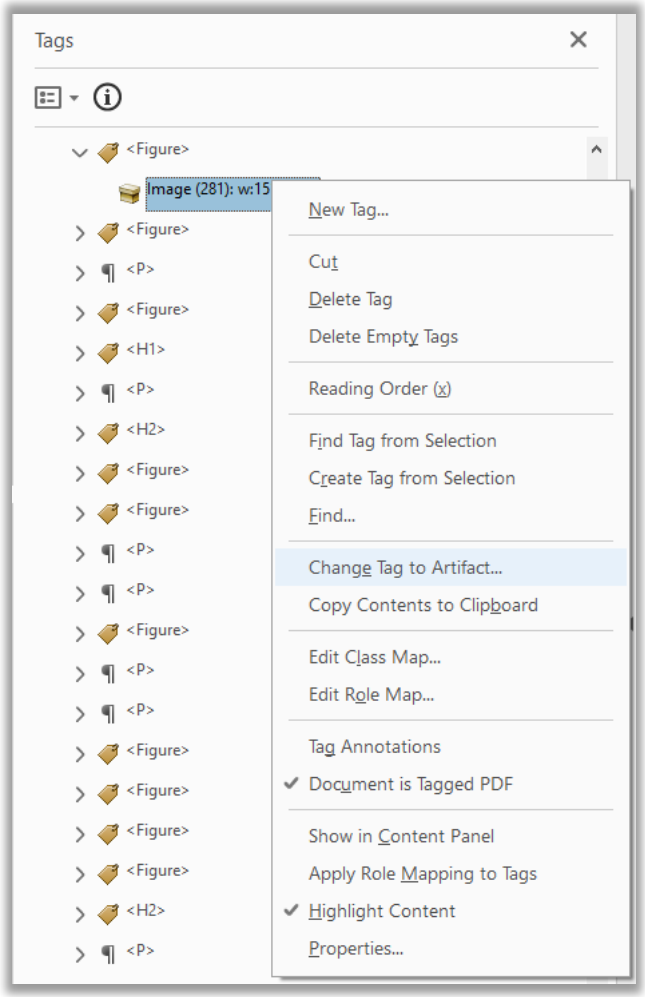


Table Headers Rule

- Checks for column and row headers
- Reading Order Tool → Select the table → Click the Table Editor button → Right click header cells → Table Cell Properties → Header Cell and Scope

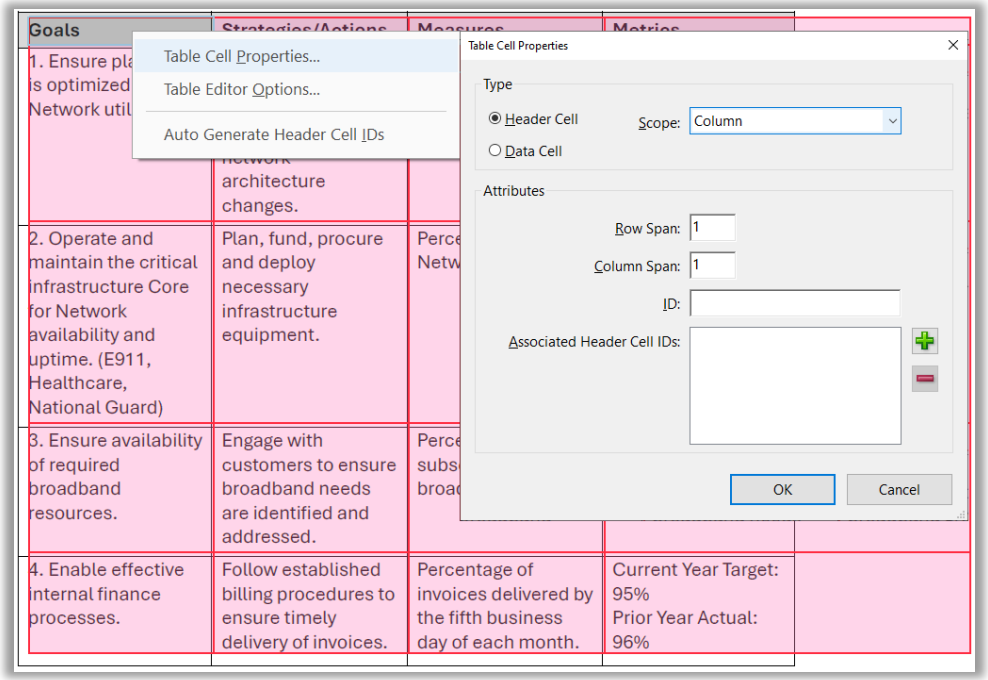


Table Regularity Rule

- Checks that each column and row has the same number of cells
- Note: Even cells with no content must have a tag for that cell.
- Tags pane → Add missing or Delete extra Table Data Cells and/ or Rows as needed

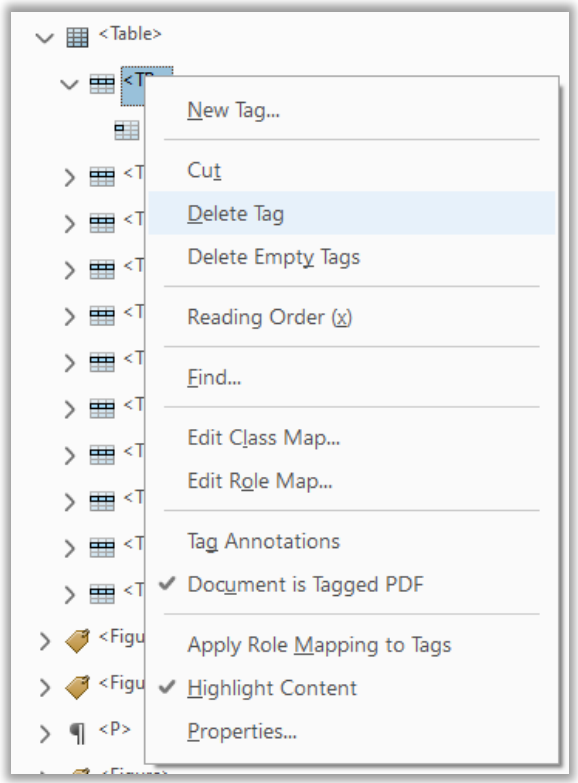
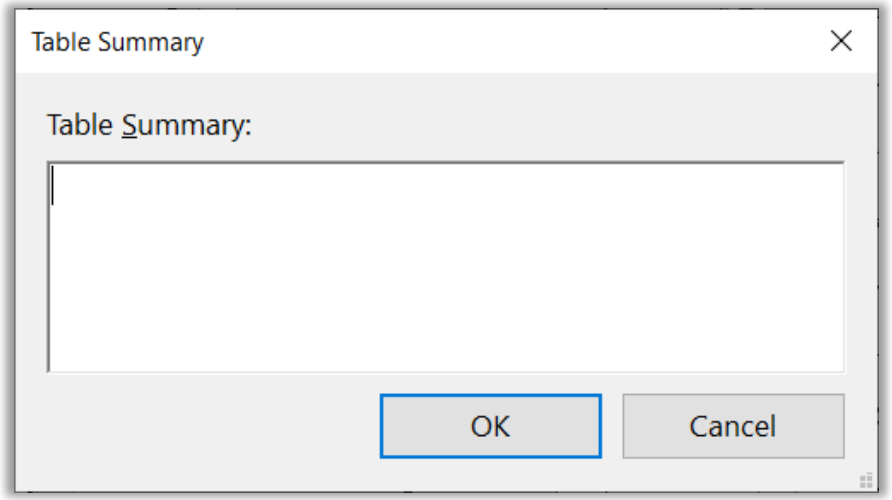


Table Summary Rule

- Checks for the presence of a table summary
- Not all assistive technology reads the summary. It may be safe to skip it, especially if you know the AT used by your audience

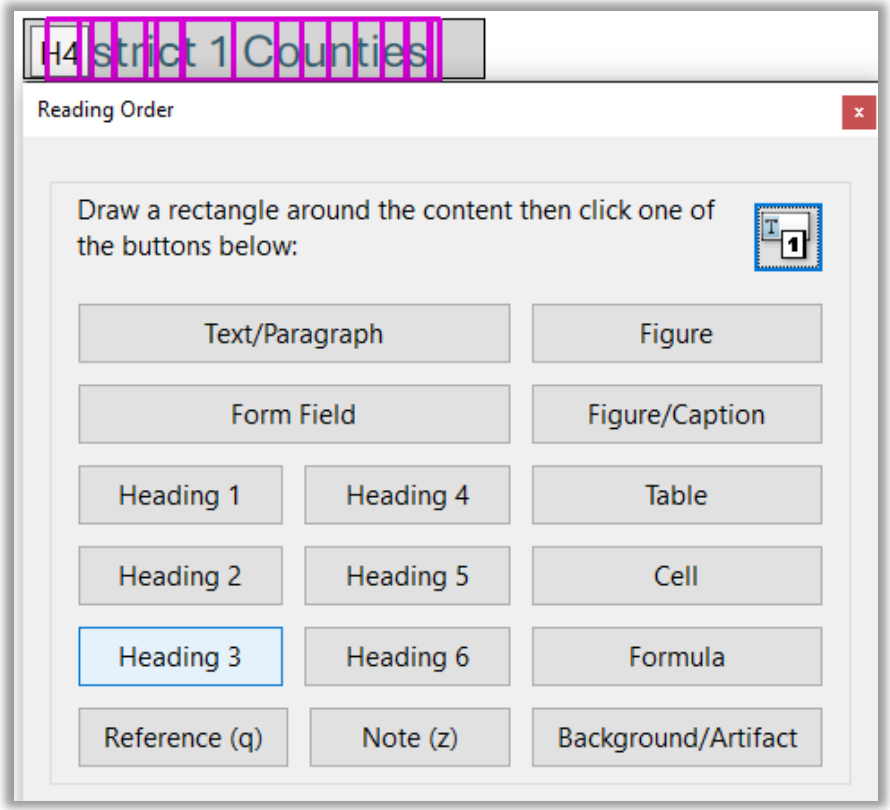


List Items Rule

- Checks that each list item (<LI>) is a child of a list (<L>)
- Nested lists must be fully contained in a list item
- Lists created in Word typically convert to PDF correctly

Headings Appropriate Nesting Rule

- Checks the order of headings for proper nesting.
- Reading Order Tool → Click heading in the physical view to select it → Click the button for the appropriate heading level



Summary

- Adobe Acrobat Pro is required for accessibility testing and repair
- Repeat the process of running the Accessibility Checker and making repairs
- Use the Reading Order Tool first for repairs
- Use the Tags Pane when necessary
- Save often!

Q&A

Questions?